

[17 August, 2000]

RAJYA SABHA

Setting up of design centres

*327. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether India's share is hardly two per cent in 75 billion dollar world handicrafts market, in *contrast* to China capturing 20 per cent market;

(b) if so, the action proposed to be taken to improve aesthetics and quality of packaging of India's handicrafts for fetching good revenue from export of handicrafts; and

(c) the action taken to set up design centres to assist forty-one lakh artisans *to* improve the quality of the items produced for export?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RAN A): (a) Data relating to the size of the world handicrafts market is not maintained by the Ministry of Textiles. However, as per the publication "India Handicrafts - A new Direction", published by the Export-Import Bank of India, the *size* of the world handicrafts market has been assessed at 75 billion Dollars in the year 1999, the export of handicrafts in the year 1999-2000, excluding carpets was 1367.01 Million US Dollars, which works out to a market share of approximately 2% of the world handicrafts market.

(b) and (c) The actions taken for improving the aesthetics *of* handicrafts items and its packaging in order to earn good revenue from export of handicrafts and to set up *design* centers to assist the artisans include; setting up of National Centre for Design and Product *Development at* Moradabad in UP and in New Delhi equipped with IT infrastructure to provide design and technology related inputs to the artisans and the exporting community; inviting reputed national and international designers for rendering design assistance; training to manufactures and exporters through Indian Institute of Packaging; organization of workshops on packaging; hiring the services of reputed institutions like NID for rendering design and technology related inputs and training to trainers. Besides, the existing Regional Design and Technical Development Centres

located at New Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta, Bangalore and Guwahati are being upgraded by providing them with Computer Aided Design facilities and modern/latest tools and equipments for enhancing quality and productivity to make the products more market competitive. Other measures like upgradation of Metal Handicraft Service Centre, Moradabad for providing better processing facility of surface finishing of metal craft; development of improved tools for wood and metal craft by IIT, Delhi; development of tools, treatment process and finishing techniques by IIT, Mumbai for Cane and Bamboo crafts; setting up of wood seasoning plans at Trivandrum, Jodhpur and Saharanpur for providing seasoned wood for making quality wood products; setting up of common facility centres in wood crafts at Trivandrum and Jodhpur and for Cane and Bamboo crafts at Agartala and Guwahati with better wood/cane and Bamboo processing machines will ultimately contribute towards higher production, reduction in drudgery of artisans, improve aesthetics and quality of handicrafts resulting in increased exports and higher realization of per unit value.

Pay and Allowance Package for the Armed Forces

*328. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Armed Forces and Government have yet to settle the long pending pay and allowance package for personnel of the Armed Forces; and

(b) if so, the reasons for delay and by when it is likely to be settled?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) A High Level Committee (HLC) under the Chairmanship of Defence Secretary was constituted specifically to consider the anomalies in the pay and allowances of the Armed Forces Personnel arising out of the implementation of the recommendations of the Fifth Central Pay Commission. A Group of Officers under the Chairmanship of the Cabinet Secretary further